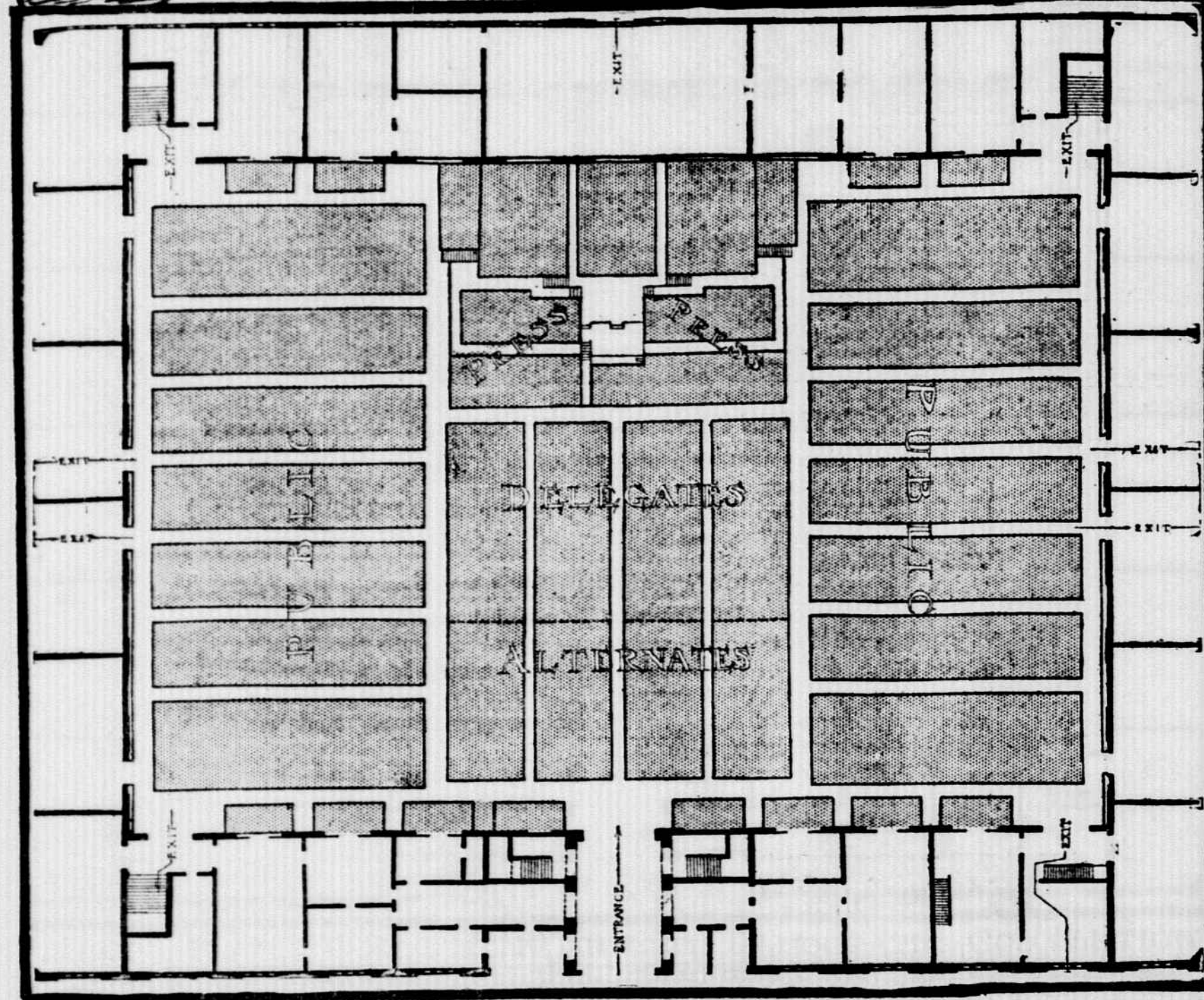


Setting the Stage for The Political Shows



FLOOR PLAN, 5TH REGIMENT ARMORY DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION



DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION HALL BALTIMORE

RECORD-BREAKING
Hall for Democratic Hosts—Will Seat 15,232 People—Seating Arrangements for Both Arenas Now Complete—Vast Hills and Terraces of Humanity—Giant Task of Assigning Seats and Preparing Tickets—How the Correspondents and Telegraph Men Are Getting Ready—Drayful of Tickets for One Hall.

BY JOHN ELFRETH WATKINS.

CONVENTION month has rolled around. The stages are nearly set for the monster political dramas to open at Chicago only a fortnight from Tuesday, and at Baltimore a week later.

In both mammoth theaters stage carpenters make deafening din of final preparation. Box office men are already on the verge of nervous prostration. Everybody and his brother seems to be pulling a wire to get a card for one big show or the other, and appears indifferent as to whether he shall sleep in a palatial hotel suite or standing up in a vestibule, whether he comes in snug parlor car or astride the trucks.

Greater suspense than ever held such multitudes before in all our political history will pervade the thousands crowded upon the terraces of seats rising above the amphitheaters wherein the mighty battles of the giants are to be fought to a finish.

Nearly five months have been spent in preparations for these two colossal dramas. The preliminaries have been in the hands of experienced men—veteran specialists in the fine art of political show managing. The same man who managed the conventions which nominated Roosevelt in 1904 and Taft in 1908 again has charge of the republican show in Chicago. This is William F. Stone, collector of the port of Baltimore, a man whose unusual executive ability led to his appointment years ago as sergeant-at-arms of the republican national committee. And John Martin, who has held the same office under the democratic national committee for twenty years, is the manager of the convention preparations in Baltimore. His experience covers the first convention that nominated Bryan, in 1896, and all similar democratic gatherings since that date. Since actual convention management all-ways falls within the province of the sergeant-at-arms of each committee, these men are about the busiest in the land today.

There will be just what spaces will be reserved for aisles. Indeed, I have before me as I write two great plats like those in theater box offices, only ten times as large. They show exactly where each ticket holder at either convention will be seated and how far he will be from the speakers' rostrum.

Take a glance, now, at the monster halls where the two conventions will meet this month.

The republican hosts will gather at Chicago in the big Coliseum, where Taft was nominated four years ago, where Roosevelt was chosen in 1904 and which was first used in 1896 for the convention in which Bryan made his famous "cross of gold" and "crown of thorns speech," sixteen years ago. When it was completed upon the eve of that exciting gathering it was braced up as the largest building under one roof in the world.

It is a stately castellated structure, built of stone, and is adorned by round turrets at the corners and flanking the entrances. It occupies a whole block of five and a half acres fronting the tracks of the Illinois Central railroad between 62d and 63d streets, at the former of which this railway has a special collection station where delegates and spectators from afar may leave their trains without the delay of traveling otherwise through the city. From this depot steps lead directly into one of the main entrances of the hall.

So vast is the hall that from one end to the other you will be able to count 111 rows of seats, on the main floor alone. And down here there will be so many sections of seats that the alphabet has been used forty-seven times in designating the chairs. Thus there will be that many different "A" seats before the gallery is reached.

The speakers' rostrum, whence will be heard the temporary chairman, and after him, the permanent chairman and speakers who place candidates in nomination, occupies a semi-circular platform about the rear of the way down the hall. At the rear of this commanding station will be three rows of seats occupied by the fifty-six members of the republican national committee, which is composed of one member from each state and territory, as well as the board of managers having charge of the convention. Behind this background of dignitaries will rise a vast bank of seats, twenty-four rows deep and eighty chairs wide. Here will be seated 1,787 guests of the national committee, a galaxy of men in uniform, besides some notables from abroad.

Immediately surrounding the speaker's platform, in front and at the sides, will be chairs and desks for 416 newspaper correspondents, only 250 of whom were provided for at the first convention held in this building, in 1896. These figures will give you some idea of the growth of journalistic enterprise within sixteen years. There will be more than two seats for each of the 190 newspapers and press associations now maintaining telegraph correspondents in the press galleries of Congress. Some of these papers will take an entire staff to each convention, including a managing editor, artists and "dope" writers, while others will be represented by a single reporter.

From the press section, in the hall, pneumatic tubes will carry these scribbles copy directly down to a big telegraph office underneath the speakers' platform. The busy correspondent, sitting at his desk, directly in front of the rostrum, will have an assistant to sort his copy and dump it down the tube, which will shoot it out upon a table at the operator's right arm.

These delegates—the men who will actually make all of the history to be wired from the convention hall—will occupy the front half of the pit. There will be 1,078 of these this year—ninety-nine more than voted in the last republican convention, 172 more than sat in that which chose McKinley in 1896.

They will sit in four panels of seats forming a block twenty-two chairs deep and fifty chairs wide. Directly behind them will be a similar block reserved for as many alternates—the reserve force whose members will hold themselves in readiness to reinforce the army of delegates should any of these fail to awaken upon any convention morning. And directly behind this auxiliary army will be a great semi-circle of seats for 640 spectators, allowed to come in on the ground floor. Surrounding these, as well as the alternates and delegates, will be placed a great horseshoe terrace from whose slopes will gaze down upon the show a multitude of nearly 3,000 onlookers. Upon the main floor alone there will be seated 7,941 people, including actors, critics and audience.

Looking down upon these from the galleries will be 3,231 more, bringing the grand total of persons of all classes provided for to 11,172.

The steel trusses supporting the great span 215 feet at their base and at their apex are nearly 100 feet from the floor upon which the expectant delegates and alternates will shuffle their nervous feet. The monster hall is completely equipped for all emergencies. Should Queensbury rules be resorted to to decide differences between rival factions, there will be a complete emergency hospital in one corner of the building. And should such turmoil result in a riot there will be fifteen exits whence the terrified audience can escape from the amphitheater. Should any

dark horse trainers start a stampede, there will be seven aisles convenient within the delegates' section alone.

Herebefore the rostrum of this giant amphitheater has been placed in the center of one of the long sides of the building. This year it will occupy the end of the hall, giving greater space behind the speakers' stand.

After a lapse of forty years Baltimore again comes into her own as a great convention city. But despite this lapse she still holds the record for the greatest number of conventions of the big parties. This year will bring her total up to fourteen such gatherings, and Chicago's up to an even dozen. Clay and Van Buren each received two nominations in the Monumental city; Andrew Jackson, Polk, Cass, Pierce, Scott, Fillmore, Douglass, Lincoln and Greeley, each one.

Baltimore owes her prompt and successful preparation for the big show of June 25 largely to the tireless efforts of Robert Crain, who, as chairman of the city's special committee selected for the purpose, was largely influential in raising the \$100,000 fund which secured the convention and who has worked like a Turk in assisting the national committee in preparing for the monster meeting.

It is the boast of Baltimore that her convention hall, the great 5th Regiment Armory, is the "largest exposition building in the United States." Like Chicago's Coliseum, it is a castellated structure, whose walls are built of substantial stone. It cost \$100,000 and has 60,000 square feet of space on its main floor. Maryland's industrial and pure food exposition was held there last autumn. The building is within less than a minute's walk from the Mount Royal railway station.

The convention will be held in a vast room, 309 feet long by 200 feet wide. Contrary to the arrangement of the republican hall this year, the speakers' platform will be in the center of the long side.

room to the other, the visitor's eye will pass over 128 rows of chairs. On this main floor will be seats for 10,788 people, 2,827 more than arranged for on the main floor of the Chicago hall.

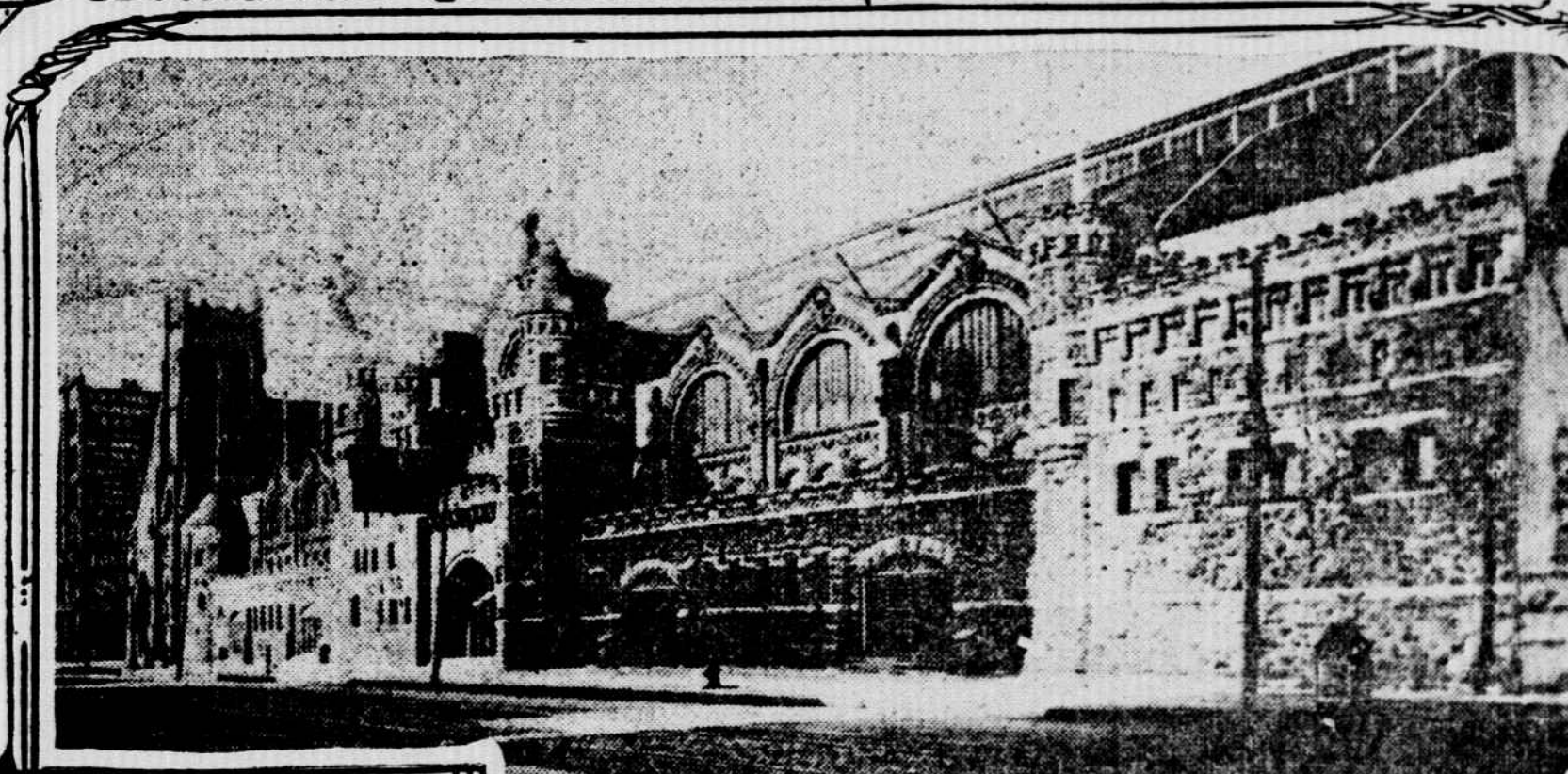
It is estimated that the Baltimore convention will need fourteen more press seats than that at Chicago. So 430 chairs in the section directly in front of and surrounding the democratic rostrum will be reserved for the newspaper men.

All details of preparation for each monster gathering are being carried out by a committee of delegates. There must be a separate set of these for each day of the convention and they must be struck from engraved plans containing complicated scroll designs, which it would be difficult for any counterfeiter without an expensive equipment to forge. For the

delegates and alternates will occupy the center of the pit, as at Chicago, and all recent conventions, and surrounding them on each side, as well as the rear, will be block after block of chairs, so commodious, to be precise, 7,332 spectators, the grand total upon the main floor being, as stated, 10,788 people.

There is also vast detail of arrangements to be entered into with the local police and fire departments, for protective measures; with local hotel men, for the housing of delegates, and with the railroads, for the scheduling of special trains.

FLOOR PLAN COLISEUM CHICAGO REPUBLICAN CONVENTION



REPUBLICAN CONVENTION HALL CHICAGO

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There is also a corps of doorkeepers to be appointed—two for each entrance to the hall. They too serve without pay and their opportunities of enjoying the excitement on the floor of the hall are far less than those of the assistant sergeants-at-arms. Then there must be pressed into service an army of clerks and watchmen and an Amazon force of charwomen, who are remunerated with real money rather than with inducements. The sergeants-at-arms themselves receive no salaries for their special work, although their expenses are borne by the national committee.

(Continued on Third Page.)